



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR
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Allow Voters to Select: “None of the Above”

Madison - Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) today called for requiring ballots in Wisconsin to have a choice of “None of the above.”

Senator Carpenter noted that in some jurisdictions candidates can not only run unopposed, but sometimes they do so for multiple elections. “Currently, there is no way for voters to express the fact that they may not support the candidate who is unopposed. A strong “none of the above” vote in an unopposed election would allow voters cast a more meaningful message that they are not happy with the unopposed candidate when they would otherwise be limited to simply leaving the ballot blank,” said Carpenter.

“A ‘none of the above’ option on the ballot would also encourage stronger participation in our elections by signaling to potential candidates that an opportunity to serve as an elected office exists; the fact that a candidate previously ran unopposed does not necessarily mean that the constituents are satisfied with their representation,” said Carpenter.

“Even in contested elections, this option might also improve the tone of campaigning. I think if candidates know that they have to positively earn the approval of the voters when there is a ‘none of the above’ option on the ballot, there might be less negative campaigning,” said Carpenter.

The result of a ‘none of the above’ vote would be non-binding. The intent of changing the law would be to express dissatisfaction with a candidate or slate of candidates – not be to have the cost of another election put on the taxpayers.

Voters in the state of Nevada currently have an option for ‘none of the above,’ which was adopted in that state in 1978.

Senator Carpenter’s press releases are available for review at
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/sen03/news>

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